

Summer in Barcelona

Education Abroad Opportunity

STEP
SECOND-YEAR TRANSFORMATIONAL

While abroad, I immersed myself in the culture through daily activities as simple as ordering 'café con leche' at a coffee shop near my house and as complex as presenting an extensive film analysis to my peers for the final project in one of my classes.

Additionally, I mastered the use of public transportation as daunting at the metro; I began recognizing the minute differences in body language and general mannerisms of Barcelona locals; I integrated myself into the city and found my niche among 1.7 million individuals.

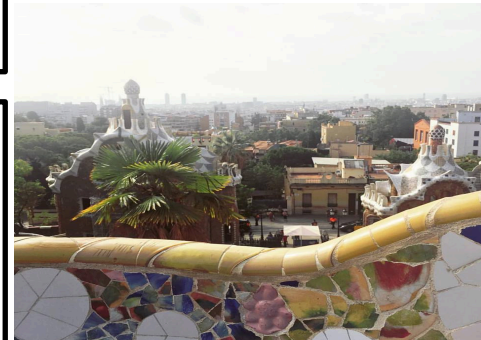
In addition to experiencing Spanish culture, I took my education abroad opportunity very personally and reflected upon *how* I was experiencing Barcelona and *what* this said about the kind of person I am: I discovered that I am resilient and curious and comfortable enough in my own skin to be okay with making a mistake in front of others; I found that I make leaps and bounds in self-awareness when I force myself outside of my comfort zone.

This past summer, I studied abroad for six weeks in Barcelona, Spain where I completed my minor. I was enrolled in two classes at Universitat Pompeu Fabra that emphasized Spanish culture through liberal arts; I lived with a host family situated right on top of one of the busiest streets in the city—and I discovered more about myself than I ever thought possible in less than fifty days.



Moving forward, I intend to look at professional school abroad. I used my experience in Barcelona as a personal test to see how I would handle life in another country—I needed to see if living abroad for an extended period of time was something that I could successfully do. After overcoming those first few hurdles and the dreaded culture shock curve, I fell in love. I fell in love with Spain, the lifestyle, the food, the colors, the fashion, the people. I am seeking to continue my education in medicine in Spain, and one day want to be a certified practitioner in both the United States and in Spain. Finally, I want to be able to open a doctor's office completely capable of administering care to women speaking either Spanish or English.

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STEP Faculty Mentor: Dr. Mark Bender
Major: Biology



My favorite part about studying abroad in Barcelona was the day I forced myself out of the comfort of my host mom's home and shoved myself into the nearest coffee shop. Though I was shaking inside from fear, I ordered my very first cup of coffee and swallowed my nerves down with two pumps of caramel and a dash of cream. Like the flip of a switch, I immediately felt at ease; my confidence in both my Spanish-speaking ability and my comfort thriving abroad. From that moment forward, I felt that I belonged in Barcelona and through STEP I learned that I am more than capable of living abroad and enjoying the experience.